DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 266 115 SP 027 159

AUTHOR Locke, Lawrence F.
TITLE Qualitative Research in the Gymnasium: Old Problems and New Responses.
PUB DATE Jun 85
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Seminaire International "La complementarite des approches methodologiques de recherche en enseignement de l'education physique" (Quebec, Canada, June 24-25, 1985). French title: La recherche qualitative dans le gymnase: Vieux problemes et nouvelles responses.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Researchers; Evaluation Criteria; *Physical Education; Research Design; *Research Methodology; *Research Problems
IDENTIFIERS *Qualitative Research

ABSTRACT

Most, though not all, qualitative research is naturalistic in that the researcher enters the world of the participants as it exists and obtains data without any deliberate intervention to alter the setting. The resulting accounts of what people say and do form the basis for inductive rather than deductive analysis--theory is created to explain the data rather than data being collected to test pre-established theory. Some graduate students and their professorial advisors have been drawn to this form of inquiry. Novices in qualitative research encounter problems which are familiar in any form of inquiry, but which often require responses different from those used in quantitative designs. This paper discusses, within the framework of research in physical education, external and internal problems and issues faced by the researcher using the qualitative design. The paper concludes with three pages of selected references for the novice. (Author/JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED266115

Qualitative Research in the Gymnasium: Old Problems and New Responses

(La recherche qualitative dans le gymnase: Vieux problemes et nouvelles responses)

Lawrence F. Locke

Department of Professional Preparation
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003
U.S.A.

Paper presented at the Séminaire International "La complémentarité des approches methodologiques de recherche en enseignement de l'éducation physique" at Universite de Quebec a Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, Canada, 24, 25 et a6 aout 1985.

SP027159

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Locke

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ABSTRACT

Research designs which fall within the broad rubric of the qualitative paradigm have begun to appear in the physical education and sport literature. The quality which distinguishes these studies from designs at the quantitative end of the scientific spectrum is less whether numbers are used in the process of recording and analyzing observations, and more whether there is sustained interaction with the people being studied in their own language and on their own turf. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand a social situation, event, role, group or interaction. This kind of inquiry is descriptive in that text (recorded words rather than numbers) is the most common form of data, and analytic or interpretive in that the investigator must discern and then articulate often subtle regularities within the data. Most, though not all, qualitative research is naturalistic in that the researcher enters the world of the participant(s) as it exists and obtains data without any deliberate intervention to alter the setting. The resulting "thick" accounts of what people say and do form the basis for inductive rather than deductive analysis--theory is created to explain the data rather than data being collected to test pre-established theory.

Despite the often great difficulty in obtaining formal training and the significant logistic problems which attend most qualitative designs, some graduate students and their professorial advisors have been powerfully drawn to this form of inquiry. The primary attractors appear to be

1. disappointment with the effort to make pedagogy a quantitative science;

2. congruence between ideology, personal disposition, or epistemological preference and the fundamental assumptions which underlie the paradigm;

3. provision of a conceptual vantage point which closely matches the ways used by teachers to obtain and validate knowledge about teaching--ideographic, holistic, multivariate, and probabilistic;

4. focus on achieving understanding of the natural context of teaching and coaching as complex environments;

5. acceptance of the teacher's or coach's own understanding of the process, not as professional courtesy or a means of obtaining access to data, but as information central to the purpose of research;

6. readability of most qualitative research reports;

7. availability of popularized versions of qualitative research;

8. high political utility of analyses and conclusions grounded in qualitative data.

Novices in qualitative research encounter problems which are familiar in any form of inquiry, but which often require responses different from those used in quantitative designs. Advisors can anticipate that these will include

1. having sound reasons for the selection of a qualitative design;
2. locating training, internship and advisement resources;
3. encountering institutional and disciplinary prejudices against qualitative research;
4. internalizing a qualitative point of view about constructed reality;
5. preparing an "open contract" research proposal--and getting it accepted;
6. making appropriate use of the "directly relevent" research literature;
7. confronting personal biases--learning to make a virtue out of personal history;
8. overcoming problems of obtaining access and cooperation;
9. resolving problems of ethics;
10. integrating quantitative data sources;
11. reducing, organizing, and displaying data for analysis;
12. discovering the loneliness of contemplating qualitative data.
13. designing appropriate use of data in preparing the report;
14. locating an outlet for publication.

It is not appropriate in a short paper to attempt serious treatment of methodologies for any research paradigm.[1] There are books and monographs which are more suitable resources for learning about methods of inquiry. For that purpose, a list of references appropriate for the novice in qualitative research is appended to this document.

It may not even be wise to attempt a brief introduction to qualitative research as a paradigm for scientific inquiry. The complex nature of the assumptions on which qualitative research is based, and the unfamiliarity of those assumptions to people schooled in the positivist epistemology of quantitative science, makes brief treatment risk caricature or distortion. Accordingly, for readers unfamiliar with qualitative research, the abstract which precedes this paper contains a sketch of elements which serve to distinguish the two ends of the scientific continuum. That simple introduction should provide sufficient background for what will be attempted here, a largely nontechnical description of what teacher education professors must face when their graduate students decide to leave the quantitative fold.

As applied to education, qualitative research may assume many different forms. For example, it might involve examining the situation of teaching the first class at the beginning of the school year: multiple subjects, multiple sites, but a single educational task, and for each subject only a single observation. In contrast, it might assume the dimensions of a micro-ethnography in which the researcher is absorbed with the detail of life in a single aerobic fitness class across a full school year: multiple roles (teachers and students), multiple observations, a single site, but a progressively widening and deepening account of how context, roles and interaction create the texture of

a small, transitory society. The focus of a qualitative study also might be on a particular social process, such as the operation of expectations in an undergraduate teacher preparation program: who expects what from whom, how were the expectations acquired, do they change over time, how are they communicated, through what sanctions are they enforced, and what are their consequences for learning to teach?

As a final example, a qualitative study might simply attend to the experience of individual people who live and work in the context of physical education. Everyone must perform the task of making sense out of the daily flow of events. In some problematic and emotionally charged areas of their work, teachers often must struggle to understand and make rational the powerful tides of their experience. How do novice teachers rationalize the painful trade-offs they often make between the instructional goals they want to pursue and the ever present demand to keep their charges happy and compliant? How do lesbian teachers make sense out of lives spent in the implacably hostile world of the public school, a world which denies them even the rudiments of dignity and honesty? What do teachers do to maintain a sense of personal worth when conditions in their workplace make instruction an impossibility?

Studies which are as different in form as these few examples will demand the use of a wide variety of tools for both acquisition and analysis of data. What the studies will have in common, however, is the particular vantagepoint of qualitative research. One way to express that unique perspective is contained in the proposition that humans construct working understandings of their social world. Those personal understandings function as the significant realities of our experience, at once determining and explaining behavior in social contexts.

Given the vantagepoint afforded by such epistemology, to study a social situation, event, role, group or interaction requires that the investigator

begin with the constructed realities of the participant(s). The objects of study in qualitative research, then, may be characterized as (a) idiographic (what is individual and personal is what must be understood), (b) complex and subtle (things are seldom what they seem, or as simple as they seem), (3) dynamic (important aspects of reality may shift in valence or alter in form during observation), and (d) interactive (reality exists only for a given context, a frame in which any element can only be understood with reference to the surround of other elements).

With those general observations about qualitative research as background, we turn now to the problems which must be confronted when graduate students determine that the qualitative vantagepoint is appropriate to the question(s) they wish to address in a thesis or dissertation. Please note that the comments which follow have nothing to do with the use of field observation, interviews or document analysis in what are otherwise traditional quantitative study designs. Aside from the technical demands peculiar to each, such methods of data collection present no special problems. The use of qualitative tools does not make qualitative research. It is the unique perspective of the paradigm, not the tools of inquiry, which produced the catalogue of concerns which follow. The list has been validated by the painful experiences of those who have made many of the mistakes for which cautions may now be issued.

The decision to undertake a qualitative study brings problems in two broad arenas: those which are external and mostly antecedent to the proposal, and those which are internal as part of content within the proposed design. While some of these difficulties overlap both areas, it will be convenient here to treat them dichotomously.

The external problems which precede the writing of a proposal begin with the author as a person. Every graduate student who is tempted to employ a qualitative design should confront one question, "Why do I want to do a

qualitative study?" and then answer it honestly. Some novice researchers, traumatized by a fourth grade encounter with fractions, see qualitative research as a way of avoiding numbers in general and statistics in particular. So long as question and method are well matched, a choice made on such personal grounds is neither improper nor dysfunctional. Personal biography is a wise consideration in locating questions and methods about which one can be enthusiastic. Unfortunately, having an aversion for math is not the same as having the personal capacities and intellectual interests demanded in the conduct of qualitative research. Avoiding statistics is not so much a bad reason for electing to do a field ethnography as it is a motive that is irrelevant to locating the kind of research which will be performed well. Having the interest, ability and patience to acquire qualitative research skills is a far more relevant foundation than discovering a bad case of math anxiety.

In the same vein, a student who elects qualitative research because it appears to be either relatively "quick" in terms of time commitment, or "easy" in terms of intellectual demands, has, in the first instance, simply never talked with anyone who has completed such a study and, in the second instance, not read published reports of qualitative research with much care. Field studies are never quick and rarely are completed within the projected time lines. The analysis of qualitative data demands a sustained level of creative thought rarely required once data are collected in a quantitative study. Qualitative research may be enormously valuable for scientific purposes, and immensely satisfying to the investigator, but quick and easy it is not.

Finally, some individuals find themselves drawn to qualitative forms of inquiry because they are unable to accept the initial assumptions which underlie quantitative research. They simply feel more comfortable, in personal or intellectual terms, with the view of knowledge and reality presumed in qualitative research. Such dispositions may constitute a sound basis for

establishing preferences in research style. Close examination of how, whether and when one "knows" something is a discipline which might profitably be practiced by all research workers.

Nevertheless, whatever one's predelections concerning such matters as objectivity, truth and reality, it still is necessary to match method to question. Ideology or personal preference in epistemology do not make it possible to fit round methods into square questions. When a graduate student becomes committed to doing qualitative research, then he or she is limited to questions which yield best to that scientific paradigm. To determine the method of inquiry before identification of the question always bears that restriction.

A second pre-proposal problem centers on the investigator's ability to move out of the quantitative mode of thought. For many graduate students the process of becoming comfortable with the qualitative way of thinking about problems requires adopting a view of the world that is alien to the fundamental canons of empirical thought. For most of us the assumptions of quantitative research have been presented and learned as "science" through at least a dozen years of school and university education. That all things which truly exist must exist in some number, and exist "out there" in some finite form which is knowable as truth, is more than the unspoken premise of quantitative research. It is an assumption which people in western cultures often accept about what is real and what is not real in the world.

To operate comfortably with the proposition that people <u>construct</u> reality, thus allowing truth to reside as much in our heads as "out there," demands a sharp alteration in habitual modes of thought. Even partially accomplished, that is difficult for most and, as experience warns us, is impossible for some. It is important that this be confronted during the early apprenticeship stage, when patient and sympathetic mentors can assist in the difficult transition of habitual perceptions and familiar concepts into a new mode of thought.

Dealing with the researcher as a person leads inevitably to a more immediate and obvious problem; finding sources for training and support. Courses and internships in qualitative research methods are rare at many institutions and unavailable at others. When such opportunities do exist they most commonly occur as upper level graduate experiences in social science departments. As such they are not always accessible to students with backgrounds in other fields. In sum, both students and professorial advisors may find themselves far more alone than they might wish.

While a degree of self-education is possible for both advisors and the solitary student, it is best to have no illusions about how difficult that process might become. Because preparation for qualitative research often is most effective and efficient when it takes the form of apprenticeship with intensive field experiences and closely supervised data analysis at the heart of the training process, the student without such opportunities must confront some serious questions. In terms of outcomes will such effort be cost-effective? Will the best solution require transfer to a more hospitable department or institution? Is there sufficient time to invest in <u>both</u> extensive preparation and a lengthy study? Hard questions, but better raised now than later!

Finally, in some departments (or whole institutions) qualitative research is not yet an acceptable form of inquiry. Individual professors may undertake to enlighten or re-educate their colleagues, or to work for revision of graduate school policies (written or unwritten), but individual graduate students are likely to find themselves overmatched in any such effort. A realistic appraisal of the political territory, including the existence of precedents and the fate of similar efforts should come before the final commitment to prepare a full scale proposal. Have potential committee members or needed consultants seen a prospectus or mini-proposal and indicated their

willingness to participate? Have qualitative studies actually been accepted by the graduate school? What questions were raised about previous qualitative proposals by review groups at department or school levels? How has the human subject review committee responded to qualitative designs in the past? Those are the practical kind of questions which should be raised.

Given some reassurance that a path might be cleared through the problems of obtaining institutional support and approval, the focus of concern shifts from the preliminaries of identifying a research question, selecting a mode of inquiry and developing research skills, to the actual task of writing a proposal. In this second broad arena the problems to be surmounted relate to the special characteristics of qualitative research. The proposal still serves the same functions, but with a new form of inquiry old problems may require new responses.

For graduate students, many of the problems encountered in preparing a proposal for qualitative research have their origins in the context and expectations of graduate education. The first of these contextual problems is related to the very nature of the document. Ordinarily, the author works to achieve a level of specification and anticipation in the proposal which will bring it as near to a "closed contract" as conditions permit. In contrast, the nature of qualitative research demands an "open contract." Unlike the typical quantitative investigation, the qualitative research worker sometimes must move back and forth between data sources and ongoing data analysis <u>during the period of data collection</u>. Initial questions are progressively narrowed or, on occasion, shifted entirely as the nature of the living context becomes apparent through preliminary analysis. While this sort of in-process shift of focus or change in method is less typical of interview-based case studies than of field ethnographies, all sub-species of qualitative research commonly undergo some form of refinement during the period of active investigation.

Accordingly, although all proposals must begin with some clear question or set of questions which can be answered only by describing and understanding a bounded slice of the world, neither the specific focus of inquiry nor the exact and final form of method and analysis can be specified in advance for most qualitative studies. In whatever discussion the proposal provides, the initial set of questions and procedures must be dealt with in general or at least tentative terms. When it is an essential part of the design to develop focus and method which are responsive to the ongoing process of data acquisition, it is difficult to describe precisely what will be done in advance. Unfortunately, in many graduate programs that is the expectation which advisors often bring to the proposal.

There are two ways to deal with this sensitive problem. The first is to engage in enough careful piloting of method and analysis to permit discussion of the matters which normally concern advisors--initial focus, study site and subjects, obtaining access, number and type of data sources, ethical concerns, forms of data processing and display, and demonstration of needed research skills. Not only can information from a preliminary study help meet the concerns of advisors, pilot work allows the researcher to shape the proposal around concrete experiences rather than speculation. This can yield greater conceptual strength as well as improvements in logistic efficiency.

The second alternative is to create a largely speculative proposal, using the existing literature to foreshadow themes and provide examples of method. At the least, this strategy permits demonstration of the author's familiarity with existing research, ability to think carefully about the problems of field investigation, and capacity to lay out intentions in broad terms. Such theoretical discourse may be sufficient for a committee which is familiar with the qualitative paradigm and confident that the novice's level of preparation will be equal to the demands of the proposed study. Under these conditions,

however, it can be anticipated that advisors will be far less helpful in conceptualizing the study or in suggesting useful strategies for data analysis. The concrete products of a good pilot study are a better basis for consultation than even the most elegant of theoretical speculations.

If qualitative proposals deviate from the norm as contracts for future action, they may deviate even more sharply in the specific area of the literature review. Some functions in this section of the proposal will be familiar if not identical replications of those present in the quantitative model. These include seating the study in the foundational literature of the paradigm, citing works which explain and legitimate the particular methods proposed for us, using scholarly works to create a frame of constructs and theory for the particular area of study, and demonstrating how the proposed research would fit into the ongoing dialogue of science.

The unique difference in the use of literature will lie in decisions which may be made concerning use of research reports dealing with the same or closely related questions. There may be sound reasons not to read that literature, at least not until after pilot work is complete, or possibly until a preliminary analysis of the data from the main study is available. The rationale for this departure from expected use of background material is not difficult to appreciate.

Remembering that the investigator <u>is</u> the primary instrument on which qualitative research must depend for acquisition of data, it is clear that such an instrument must be fully open to the print of other people's view of their world without imposing the freight of the observer's own perceptions. For that purpose there are obvious advantages to beginning study without knowledge of conclusions reached by others working in the same context. The necessary critical comparison of results with the published literature may best be left to the final stage of the research process.

Under the best of conditions the problem of what to read often proves to be more complicated than the novice anticipates. In some cases the most helpful information about appropriate methods can only be found imbedded in the very reports the student might wish to eschew. In other cases, advisors may argue that whatever contamination might devolve from reviewing previous research presents no more risk than the collection of values and beliefs already present in the novice's head, and thereby urge use of every possible resource in constructing the proposal.

Resolution of these dilemmas will be neither simple nor perfectly satisfying to all parties. The only certain rule applies here as in any other proposal. The author is obligated to do a thorough search of the literature so that decisions about the timing and nature of use will relate to the complete body of potentially relevant resources. As with quantitative proposals, whether related research is grouped in a separate review section or is used as needed throughout the proposal is an individual choice.

Another problem encountered in qualitative proposals is the task of "coming clean" about the ways in which personal biography will influence the research process. All researchers, quantitative as much as qualitative, bring significant personal baggage to the tasks of inquiry. It may be possible to pretend that the investigator's person can effectively be isolated from the processes of quantitative research. This pretense, however, is never possible in qualitative research.

Clear threats to accurate perception in terms of previous experience in the research setting, personal values, characteristic assumptions, and obvious bias must be addressed directly in the proposal. This is not done in an attempt to cleanse one's self of personal viewpoint and become neutral relative to the subject of study. Most qualitative researchers hold "objectivity" to be an illusion, a human state that is both impossible and undesirable to achieve.

What the investigator brings to the setting can become a positive part of the research process, but only if it is recognized as an inextricable part of every step from question to conclusion. Coming clean thus means the creation of awareness, not the divestiture of self.

While concerns such as observer bias do have analogues in quantitative research, they are here a more pervasive problem, and one for which there are seldom simple solutions. For example, one of the most common problems of investigator biography occurs when graduate students, who themselves are former teachers or school administrators, design a study which requires them to return to the context of public education and play the role of unbiased spectator. Their first attempts to observe often trigger an avalanche of judgments about right or wrong, effective or ineffective, and desirable or undesirable, all based on the observer's past experiences in similar settings. This unbidden flood of evaluation poses a severe impediment to seeing, much less understanding, the world as experienced by the present participants. This particular problem is difficult to overcome and is precisely why it sometimes is best to select problems in a subject area or context with which the investigator has not had extensive previous experience.

The proposal should provide evidence that factors of personal background have been scrupulously examined, understood, and accommodated by clear provisions for self-monitoring at each stage of the study. It often is possible to make plans to control for the influence of biography at the stages of data gathering and data analysis. It may be desirable, for example, to cross check the investigator's perceptions and decisions with a colleague wherever it is evident that personal dispositions might interact with bias-sensitive research tasks.

The final problem is not unique to qualitative proposals, but it is predictably more complex and troublesome. Issues concerning the ethics of

qualitative research continue to stimulate debate and concern, perhaps most so among those who have extensive experience with the paradigm. To resolve these, novices may need lengthy discussion with advisors, and certainly will require long dialogue with their conscience.

The issues here are not all abstract, subtle, gradual or distant from the person of the investigator. They can be sudden painful and fraught with genuine risk. How does the researcher weigh morality and pragmatic concerns when a subject is observed engaging in an illegal action? What does the observer do when an informant suddenly demands access to field notes? What is ethical behavior when circumstances appear to demand that the investigator take an active part in the very events for which non-participant observation is the desired role? What is the right response when a school principal accuses the program evaluator of collusion with teachers for the purpose of subverting district policy? What action represents ethical behavior when the guarantee of subject anonymity is irretrievably breached after twenty in-depth interviews have already been conducted?

Whenever investigators enter into the daily lives of others at the level of intrusion required for qualitative study, significant problems of ethics are raised. Because the potential for direct harm is less obvious and the issues are more subtle than those typically encountered in quantitative research, ethical problems are easier to overlook in the proposal--and thereby are doubly serious.

The obligation to protect the best interest of subjects has compelling force in the qualitative paradigm. To complete a successful study requires that one or several residents in the study context welcome the investigator as a guest and a trusted confidant. It is the exception rather than the rule when subjects, by sharing their intimate version of events, are not exposed to some risk or disadvantage. This is most commonly the case in terms of possible

repercussions on relationships with other people in the setting. It is all too easy for an informant to be regarded as a tattletale. The ideal role of ethical conduct requires that whenever the researcher has a choice between using or not using material that is valuable to the study, but which may make the subject vulnerable, the interest of the subject must be selected over that of the investigation. It is much easier to subscribe to this, however, than it is to carry it out when interesting information must be lost.

At the least, such problems place heavy responsibility on the visitor for sensitive protection of sources. That the novice researcher understands this should be evident in every part of the proposal: the choice of language, the constraints accepted, the security devised to protect data, the establishment of informed consent at entry, the negotiation of subject rights, and the provision of genuine reciprocity with collaborating hosts. The definition of what is right and acceptable conduct may be treated as a matter which is relative to context; for different circumstances there may be different rules of behavior. Determining these definitions with great care, however, is not an optional element in the proposal. Attention to ethical problems is an essential obligation in the planning of all research.

Once the unique problems have been considered: the open contract, limited use of the literature, personal biography, and ethical questions, the more general tasks of proposal writing can be addressed in the specific forms they assume for qualitative study. Each author will devise a list of tasks based upon his or her training and experience, and the particular nature of the proposed study.

The following items seem to rise to the top of many priority lists.

1. Developing a language or set of constructs for talking about the question to be pursued.

2. Identifying an appropriate site, data sources and methods of gathering information.
3. Setting boundaries for the investigation--what is inside and what is beyond the limits of the study?
4. Determining strategies to insure reliability and validity in data.
5. Establishing procedures that will leave a clear trail allowing others to know with reasonable precision how and why decisions were made at each stage of the study.
6. Developing procedures for data management, reduction and display.
7. Identifying at least the first steps in data analysis.
8. Laying plans for negotiating entry into the field of study.

This is an appropriate point to make note of one of the most interesting options available to the scholar who is interested in qualitative techniques. It obviously is possible to gather qualitative and quantitative forms of data within the same study. Whether it also is possible to analyze those data from perspectives which genuinely represent the two distinctive world views, combining results in some truly meaningful fashion, is the subject of continuing and energetic debate.

Whatever the conclusion of that long dialogue among scientists, it is a fact that a growing number of published studies do include both qualitative and quantitative elements. Further, there is evidence that designs employing such combinations have made important contributions to program evaluation, organizational studies and policy development. Even if quantitative data are not gathered, the investigator may still have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the quantification of qualitative information as part of the data reduction process.

The salient question here is whether an attempt to combine qualitative and quantitative paradigms is an appropriate undertaking for a beginner in

research. Certainly there are examples in almost every academic and professional literature. Novices can inspect these and form their own conclusions about the complexity of the process and the quality of the result.

The experience of advisors suggests simply that if doing one kind of research is difficult, doing two kinds at once may be doubly so. The line between what is courageous and what is foolhardy is not always easy to discern. The importance of ending up on the right side of that line, however, is clear and compelling. The work of a novice, like any other, must meet a basic test. It must be done well, with correct use of both the techniques of data acquisition and modes of data analysis common to the scientific paradigm(s) employed. With that in mind, both the power of the design and the capability of the designer become legitimate concerns in planning any study. The resulting rule is clear and simple. Approve only those studies you honestly believe students are prepared to execute.

To close on a note of optimism, it is fair to observe that decisions about each of these planning steps are more "forgiving" than they tend to be in quantitative research. The selection of a study site, for example, probably is not as critical as the novice is inclined to believe. There is a strong tendency after reading impressive field studies to believe that the great site produced the fine study. Experienced qualitative research workers, however, are more inclined to credit careful planning, perceptive analysis of data--and luck. None of the decisions made for the proposal are likely to make or break a first effort, even though they are decisions that must be made. The most helpful advice for the beginner in qualitative research is to plan as carefully as possible, but to keep a healthy respect for the surprises to be encountered and the inevitable adjustments that must be made in the best laid plans.

NOTES

[1]A scientific paradigm is a particular way of thinking about meaning in the context of inquiry. Just as each person has a cognitive schema for making sense of the world of daily experience, groups of scientists have particular ways of making sense out of their scientific world. The area of paradigmatic epistemology is beyond the scope of this paper, but acquaintance with the concepts and issues therein will be part of the essential preparation of any young scholar. For readers not yet introduced to research paradigms I recommend the work of Tuthill and Ashton (1983) and Howe (1985) as appropriate places to begin, particularly because of their close attention to education and the ways in which research paradigms differ in the physical and social sciences.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

(SELECTED REFERENCES FOR THE NOVICE)

Agar, M. (1985). Speaking of ethnography. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Bolster, A. S. (1983). Toward a more effective model of research on teaching. Harvard Educational Review, 53(3), 294-308.

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis. Exeter, NH: Heineman.

Cook, T. D., & Reichardt, C. S. (Eds.). (1979). Qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluation. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Dobbert, M. L. (1982). Ethnographic research: Theory and application for modern schools and societies. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Eisner, E. W. (1981). On the difference between scientific and artistic approaches to qualitative research. The Educational Researcher, 10(4), 5-9.

Fetterman, D. M. (1984). Ethnography in educational evaluation. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Gage, N. L. (1985). Hard gains in the soft sciences: The case of pedagogy. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine.

Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (19). Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. Orlando, FL: Academic Press, Inc.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). Effective evaluation. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Hamilton, S. F. (1983). The social side of schooling: Ecological studies of classrooms and schools. The Elementary School Journal, 83(4), 313-334.

Howe, K. R. (1985). Two dogmas of educational research. Journal of Teacher Education, 14(8), 10-18.

Kirk, J. & Miller, M. L. (1985). Reliability and validity in qualitative research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Locke, L., Wyrick-Spirduso, W., & Silverman, S. (in press). Proposals that work: A guide for planning research in education.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (1980). Qualitative evaluation methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Popkewitz, T. S., & Tabachnick, B. R. (Eds.). (1981). The study of schooling: Field based methodologies in educational research and evaluation. New York: Praeger.

Rogers, V. R. (1984). Qualitative research--another way of knowing. In P. L. Hosford (Ed.) Using what we know about teaching (pp. 85-106). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Rossman, G. B., & Wilson, B. L. (1984). Numbers and words: Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single large-scale study. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 246-123).

Schofield, J. W., & Anderson, K. (1984). Integrating quantitative components into qualitative studies: Problems and possibilities for research on intergroup relations in education settings. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 248-250).

Shulman, L. S. (1981). Disciplines of inquiry in education: An overview. The Educational Researcher, 10(6), 5-12, 23.

Smith, J. K. (1983). Quantitative versus qualitative research: An attempt to clarify the issue. The Educational Researcher, 12(3), 6-13.

Spindler, G. (1982). Doing the ethnography of schooling. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Templin, T. J., & Griffin, P. (1985). Ethnography: A qualitative approach to examining life in physical education. In C. L. Vendien and J. E. Nixon (Eds.), Physical education teacher education (pp. 140-146). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Tuthill, D., & Ashton, P. (1983). Improving educational research through development of educational paradigms. The Educational Researcher, 12 (10), 6-14.

Van Maanen, J. (Ed.). (1983). Qualitative methodology. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.